

provisional patent application Serial No. 60/077,472, filed 10 March 1998, incorporated herein by reference, and claims priority thereto under 35 U.S.C. §119(e).

IN THE CLAIMS:

Amend claims 1, 5 and 6 as follows.

1 (amended). A method for determining a characteristic of a microorganism, wherein said method comprises the steps of:

(a) concentrating said microorganism which comprises the steps of:

(i) adding a sample containing said microorganism to a centrifuge tube;

(ii) centrifuging said sample in said centrifuge tube to concentrate said microorganism, said centrifuge tube comprising an upper region, a middle region and a lower region wherein an inner diameter of said upper region is larger than an inner diameter of said middle region; and, either an inner diameter of said middle region is larger than an inner diameter of said lower region or the inner diameter of the middle region and the lower region are capable of holding an air bubble between aqueous liquids in the middle region and the lower region;

(b) extracting nucleic acid from said concentrated microorganism to produce extracted nucleic acids;

(c) treating nucleic acid derived from said concentrated microorganism to produce fragments of nucleic acid; and

(d) determining one or more of the following characteristics of the microorganism; (1) the number of said fragments of nucleic acid, (2) the lengths of at least one of said fragments of nucleic acid, (3) the mass of at least one of said fragments of nucleic acid or (4) at least a partial sequence of at least one of said fragments of nucleic acid.

5 (amended). The method of claim 1 further comprising:

immobilizing said extracted nucleic acids or said nucleic acid derived from said concentrated microorganism on a solid support to produce immobilized nucleic acid, and treating said immobilized nucleic acid with one or more restriction enzymes to produce at least one fragment of said nucleic acid.

6 (amended). The method of claim 1, wherein said nucleic acid from said concentrated microorganism is not amplified before said treating nucleic acid.

Add new claim 13 as follows.

13. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein one or more restriction enzymes are used to produce said fragments of nucleic acid.